



A Safe, Affordable Home:  
The Foundation of Opportunity

**Testimony of David Fink**  
**Policy Director, Partnership for Strong Communities**  
**Housing Committee, LOB – February 17, 2015**  
**In Re: SB 892, HB 6147, HB 6461, HB 6462**

Rep. Butler, Sen. Holder-Winfield, Rep. Kupchick, Sen. Hwang,

My name is David Fink, policy director for The Partnership for Strong Communities, a statewide housing policy organization based in Hartford. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I would first like to offer my strong support for **SB 892**. Gov. Malloy, Commissioner Klein, this committee and this entire General Assembly has continually supported the HOMEConnecticut program since its inception. The proposal to increase capital funding incentives for municipalities that create mixed-income housing in Incentive Housing Zones will make it more likely that zones and units are created. Giving the commissioner, who thoroughly understands the value and role of the program, discretion in waiving density requirements when appropriate, again would make affordable and mixed-income housing creation more likely in more municipalities. We trust Commissioner Klein to reasonably weigh the reasons for a waiver and grant one only when necessary. This committee may have questions about the use of waivers, and I would be happy to discuss them. But I believe that exercising such power in a thoughtful, measured way can allow many more municipalities to employ the advantages of the statute, and I believe Commissioner Klein deserves that power.

I would also like to briefly comment on several other bills:

- We are opposed to **HB6147**. While requirements in the bill might be beneficial -- affordable housing built around transportation nodes, for example -- the bill could easily restrict affordable housing creation in some locations where it is sorely needed.
- While we recognize that this is a very difficult budget year, we strongly support the spirit of **HB6461**. The state's housing situation suffers from costs that are too high, supply that is too short and information about markets and needs that is much too limited. If CT is to proactively and efficiently meet the needs of those who need an affordable, safe, secure place to live, it needs better data.

- While we understand the sentiment behind **HB6462** is to create many more affordable homes in high-resource communities, we believe the percentages may be too rigid and the bill might hamstring CHFA. Having said that, we believe DOH and CHFA have used -- and MUST CONTINUE to use -- Low Income Housing Tax Credits and the other tools at its disposal to create affordable units in high-resource communities. Research shows clearly that, if we really want to end poverty, really want to close the achievement gap, really want to provide real opportunity, we will provide more choices in more municipalities that are affordable and meet the particular needs of low- and moderate-income households.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.